2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East

Working paper submitted by Algeria

1. Algeria attaches particular importance to the effective implementation of the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Algeria recalls that this important resolution was adopted in the context of a comprehensive agreement for collective support by Arab countries for the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The establishment of such a zone in the Middle East region is a fundamental and necessary element for the security and stability of States in the region, and for the maintenance of regional and international peace and security.

2. As a State Party to the Treaty, Algeria complies strictly with all its obligations. It believes that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone requires universal accession to this Treaty, particularly by all countries in the Middle East region, and the placement of all their nuclear facilities under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, as recommended in the study on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East (A/45/435).

3. Furthermore, the Security Council, in its resolution 487 (1981), explicitly called upon Israel to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards.

4. The establishment of this zone is a sensitive matter. For that reason, the international community has given this issue particular attention since its inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly in 1974. In addition to the specific resolution adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, an annual General Assembly resolution also calls for the establishment of such a zone. In this regard, Algeria recalls that the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East was adopted as part of a compromise package consisting of a decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty, a decision on the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and a decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, as well as the resolution on the Middle East. The 2000 Review Conference called on Israel to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA

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safeguards in order to realize the goal of universal adherence to the Treaty in the Middle East.

5. Fifteen years after its adoption, the lack of progress towards implementing the resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is regrettable. Notwithstanding the support enjoyed by the Treaty and the fact that all States in the region have acceded to it, this goal has not yet been realized owing to Israel's refusal to accede to the Treaty and to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards, as it was requested to do by the State Parties at the 2000 Review Conference. The persistence of this attitude threatens to undermine the authority of the Treaty and the credibility of the review process itself.

6. The statement by the former Israeli Prime Minister on 11 December 2006 regarding Israel's possession of nuclear weapons represents a real source of concern for the security of the region's countries. It confirms that Israel remains the only State in the region to possess a nuclear arsenal while remaining outside the Treaty and hence avoiding acceptance of comprehensive IAEA safeguards.

7. Against this backdrop, Algeria underscores the need to implement a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East without delay. It is therefore important that the 2010 Review Conference should strongly reaffirm the validity of the 1995 resolution on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East and thereby recognize the related security needs of the countries in the region.

8. In that regard, it is vital that the States Parties, particularly the three depository States and sponsors of the 1995 resolution, should take practical steps to encourage Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon Party and to place its facilities under IAEA safeguards. To that end, the Review Conference should establish a subsidiary body to identify specific measures and a clear timetable for achieving implementation of the resolution.

9. Algeria, and the other members of the League of Arab States and the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, have also agreed upon a number of proposed recommendations for the Review Conference aimed at fostering the establishment of this zone. Inter alia, they recommend:

(a) Reaffirming that the presence of nuclear weapons in the region of the Middle East poses a threat to regional and international peace and security;

(b) Calling on Israel to accede to the Treaty as a non-nuclear-weapon Party and to place its nuclear facilities under IAEA safeguards;

(c) Reiterating the commitment made by the State Parties to the Treaty, in particular the three depository States, to work for the implementation of the 1995 resolution and to adopt practical and effective measures that could include:

- Renewal of the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States to implement article I of the Treaty, in particular, by undertaking not to transfer to Israel nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, directly or indirectly;
- An undertaking by the States Parties to the Treaty not to cooperate in the nuclear field with Israel or to transfer to it nuclear-related equipment, information, material and facilities;
- The establishment of a body responsible for monitoring implementation of the resolution.